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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and called upon Member States to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the Convention as a matter of priority.

2. In its resolution 54/158 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide all the facilities and assistance necessary for the promotion of the Convention through the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights and the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights; welcomed the global campaign for the entry into force of the Convention and invited the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts with a view to disseminating information on and promoting understanding of the Convention; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session an updated report on the status of the Convention. A similar resolution, resolution 2000/49 of 25 April 2000, was adopted by the Commission on Human Rights.

3. As at 1 July 2000, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has been ratified or acceded to by Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Uganda and signed by Bangladesh, Chile and Turkey. The Convention will enter into force when at least 20 States have ratified or acceded to it.

4. Promotion of the international human rights treaties, including the Convention, is an ongoing priority of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In a follow-up to their 1997 appeal to Governments urging ratification of the treaties, the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner sent a joint letter to heads of Governments on 19 January 1999, to which some positive responses have already been received. In addition, on 15 May 2000, the Secretary-General sent a letter to all heads of State or Government inviting them to take the opportunity presented by the Millennium

* A/55/150.

** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/248, sect. C, para. 1, this report is being submitted on 21 July 2000 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

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Summit, to be held in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, to sign and ratify or accede to the multilateral treaties deposited with him. The 25 treaties representing the United Nations key objectives were listed in an attachment to the letter. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was included in that core group of treaties.

5. Under the joint programme between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme entitled "Human Rights Strengthening", a series of workshops at the subregional and national levels will be organized in 2000 and 2001. These workshops will aim at raising understanding of the main treaty provisions, examining the implications of ratification and informing Governments of the kinds of assistance that are available from the United Nations if they should wish to pursue ratification. The Convention on the Rights of Migrants is one of the seven treaties covered by these workshops.

6. Furthermore, the International Steering Committee of the Global Campaign for Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Migrants, which was formed in March 1998 for the purpose of building and popularizing a global campaign to promote the ratification and entry into force of the Convention, continued its activities, including through its national counterparts. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in and supported this initiative. In particular, a round table was held on 12 April 2000 during the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights. The round table was attended by the High Commissioner, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants has recommended that actions be taken to promote the ratification of the Convention. She has also participated in meetings of the Steering Committee.

7. Finally, through the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, efforts have been pursued by the Secretariat to establish a dialogue with States not having adhered to international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of Migrants.